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(54) **SENSOR SYSTEM FOR DRUG DELIVERY DEVICE, DRUG DELIVERY DEVICE HAVING THE SAME AND METHOD OF USING THE SAME**

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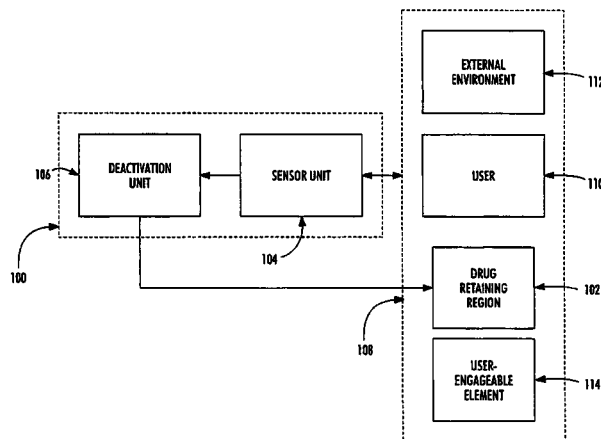
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ABSTRACT

A system for use with a drug delivery device includes a sensor unit and a deactivation unit operatively coupled to an output of the sensor unit and to a drug-retaining region of the drug delivery device, wherein the drug-retaining region contains a drug. The sensor unit is configured to detect a characteristic of a local environment and generate an output corresponding to a value of the detected characteristic. The deactivation unit is configured to render the drug ineffective when the output of the sensor unit satisfies a predetermined condition.

15 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



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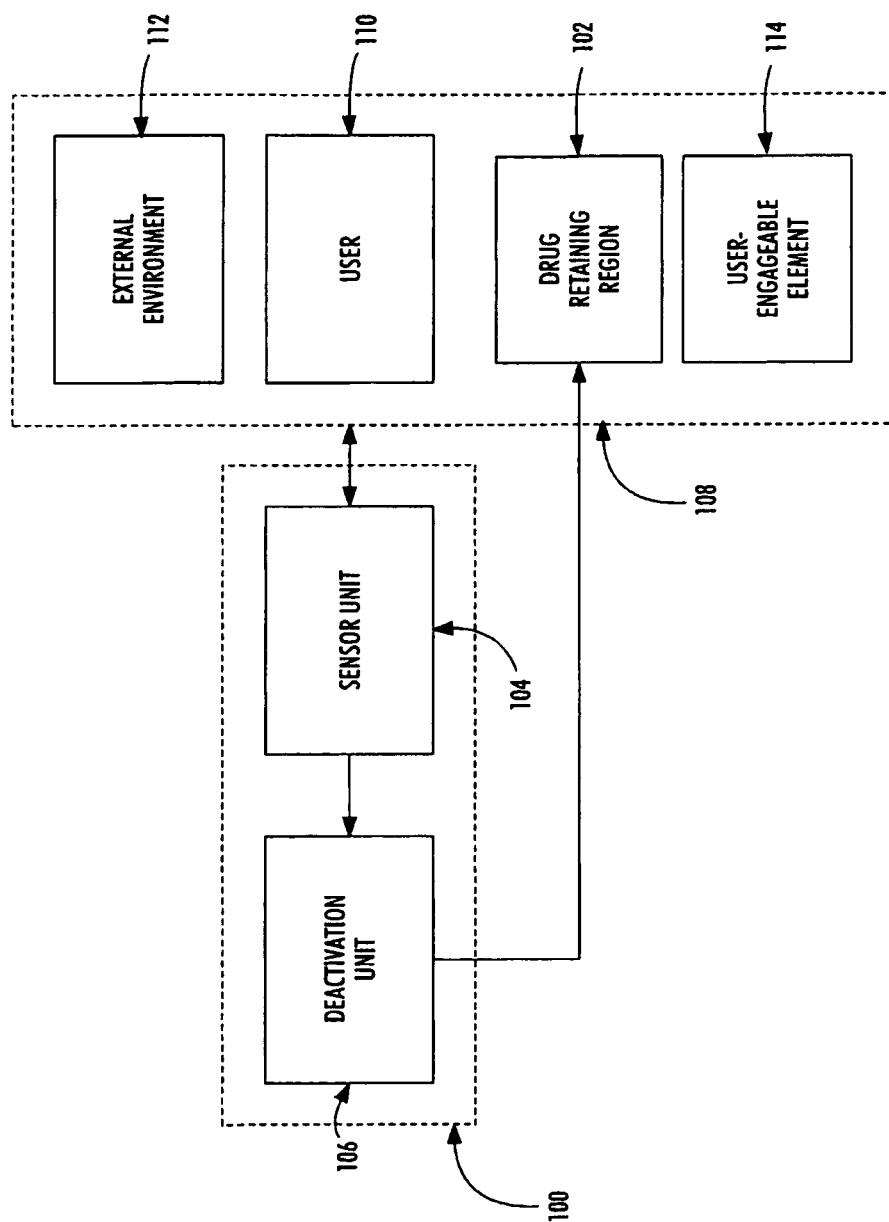


FIG. 1

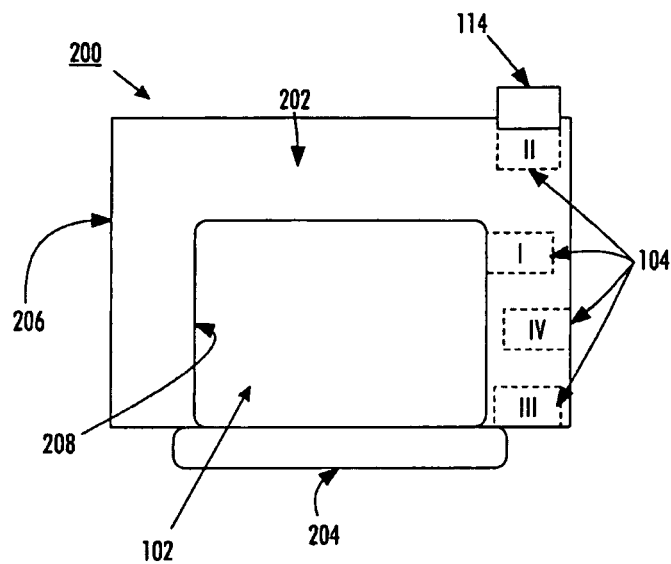


FIG. 2

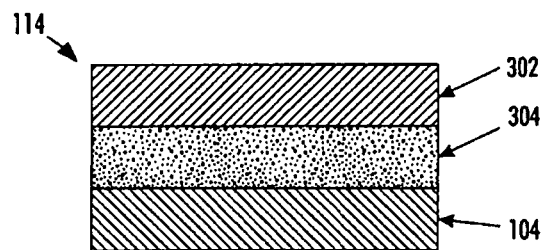


FIG. 3

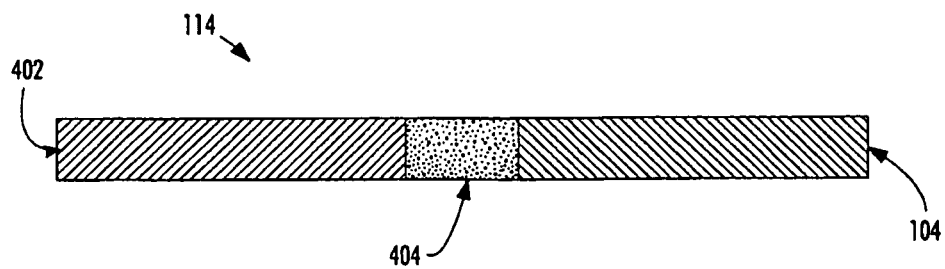


FIG. 4

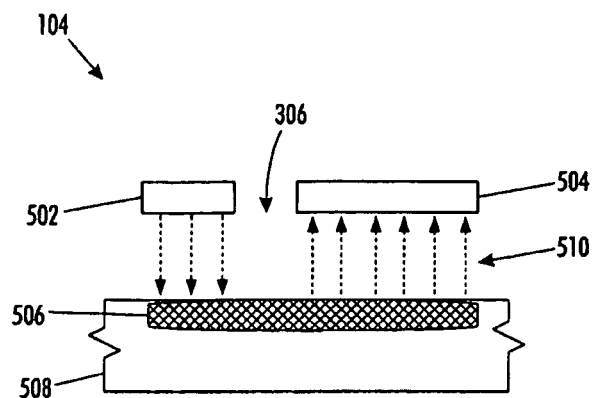


FIG. 5

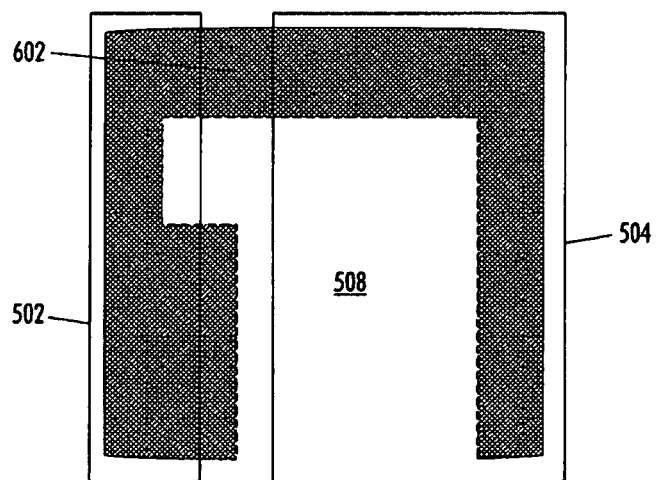


FIG. 6

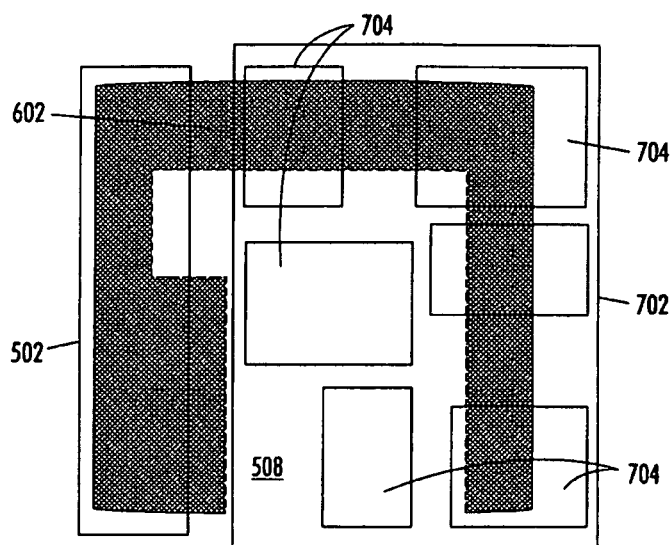
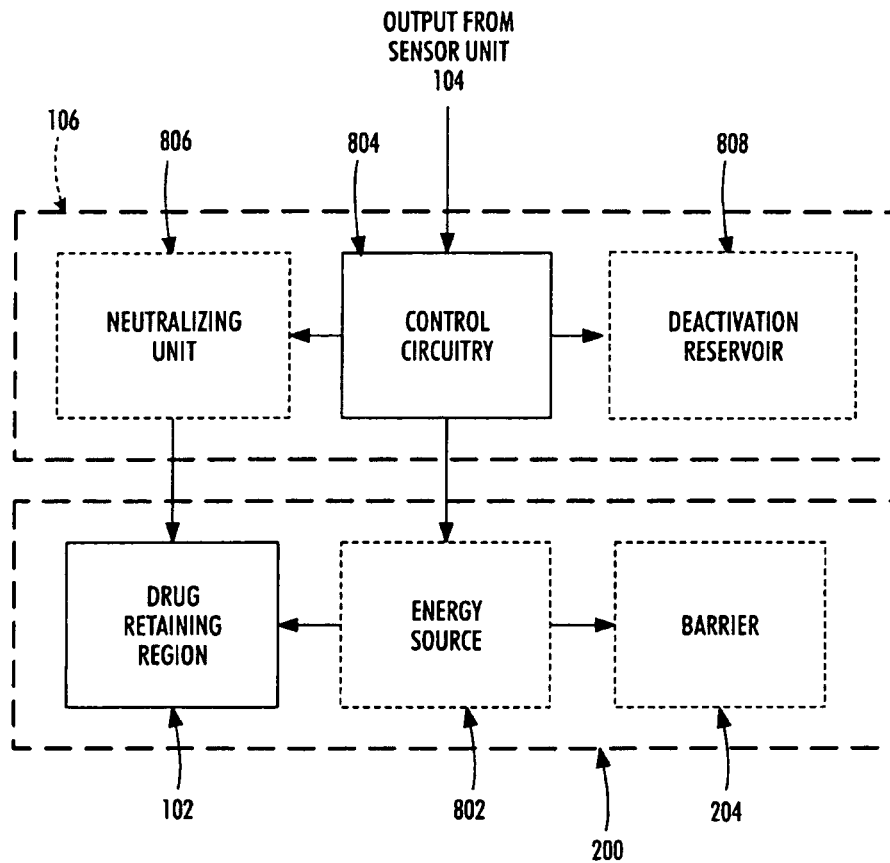


FIG. 7

**FIG. 8**

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SENSOR SYSTEM FOR DRUG DELIVERY DEVICE, DRUG DELIVERY DEVICE HAVING THE SAME AND METHOD OF USING THE SAME

TECHNICAL FIELD

Embodiments exemplarily described herein are generally related to sensor systems for drug delivery devices and, more particularly, sensor systems configured to facilitate a determination whether a drug within a drug delivery device should be rendered ineffective.

BACKGROUND

Generally, drug delivery devices (such as inhalers, syringes, intravenous bags, implantable drug delivery systems, transdermal patches, pill bottles, liquid medicine bottles, eyedroppers, etc.) store drugs until the drugs are required by a user. There are numerous occasions when it would be desirable to render the drugs contained within such drug delivery devices ineffective either automatically or manually in order to prevent the drug from being improperly released into the public (e.g., through the public water supply, through the garbage, etc.) or improperly obtained (e.g., through tampering of the drug delivery device).

It was the understanding and recognition of these and other problems associated with the conventional art that formed the impetus for the embodiments exemplarily described herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 schematically illustrates elements of a sensor system for use with a drug delivery device;

FIG. 2 schematically illustrates a drug delivery device useable with the sensor system shown in FIG. 1, in accordance with some embodiments;

FIGS. 3-7 illustrate sensor unit according to some embodiments; and

FIG. 8 schematically illustrates elements of the deactivation unit shown in FIG. 1, according to some embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 schematically illustrates elements of a sensor system for use with a drug delivery device.

Referring to FIG. 1, a sensor system 100 may be provided for use with a drug delivery device (not shown). The drug delivery device may include a drug-retaining region 102 containing a drug. An exemplary discussion of drug delivery devices capable of use with the sensor system 100 is provided with respect to FIG. 2.

As illustrated in FIG. 1, the sensor system 100 may, for example, include a sensor unit 104 and a deactivation unit 106 operatively coupled to an output of the sensor unit 104 and to the drug-retaining region 102 of the drug delivery device. The sensor unit 104 may be configured to detect a characteristic of a local environment 108 and generate an output corresponding to a value of the detected characteristic. The deactivation unit 106 may be configured to render the drug ineffective when the output of the sensor unit 104 satisfies a predetermined condition.

The deactivation unit 106 may be operatively coupled to an output of the sensor unit 104 via a wired or wireless communication medium.

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The characteristic of the local environment 108 detectable by the sensor unit 104 include a mechanical characteristic, a thermal characteristic, an electrical characteristic, an optical characteristic, a chemical characteristic, or the like or a combination thereof.

The local environment 108 may include the drug-retaining region 102, the user 110, a region outside the user 110 and the drug delivery device (hereinafter referred to as an “external environment 112”), a user-engageable element 114 or the like or a combination thereof. A characteristic of the user-engageable element 114 is detectable by the sensor unit 104 when the user engages with the user-engageable element 114.

As used herein, the term “drug” refers to any material intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease in a human or other animal, or any material (other than food) which affects the structure or any function of the body of a human or other animal. Thus, a drug is rendered “ineffective” when its intended use is prevented from being realized by the user. For example, a drug’s intended use is prevented from being realized by the user when the drug cannot be transported from the drug-retaining region 102 to a location outside the drug delivery device, when the drug is neutralized within the drug-retaining region 102, when the bio-activity of the drug is blocked within the user, or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the predetermined condition is satisfied when the value of a detected characteristic of the local environment 108 is outside a predetermined range for the detected characteristic, when the value of a detected characteristic of the local environment 108 is outside a predetermined range for the detected characteristic, when a rate at which the value of a detected characteristic of the local environment 108 changes is outside a predetermined range for the detected characteristic, or the like or a combination thereof.

FIG. 2 schematically illustrates a drug delivery device useable with the sensor system shown in FIG. 1.

Referring to FIG. 2, a drug delivery device 200 capable of use with the sensor system 100 may, for example, include a housing 202, within which the aforementioned drug-retaining region 102 is located, and a barrier 204 coupled to the housing 202.

Generally, the housing 202 is configured to maintain the effectiveness of drug within the drug-retaining region 102 within a predetermined environment. In one embodiment, the predetermined environment may be air having a controlled room temperature (e.g., about 68° C. to about 77° F.). In another embodiment, the predetermined environment may be within the user’s body.

The housing 202 may be formed from a single, integral structure or may be formed from a plurality of separate structures. The housing 202 may have an exterior surface 206, which is exposed to an external environment, and an interior surface 208, which is exposed to a drug contained within the drug-retaining region 102. The exterior surface 206 and the interior surface 208 of the housing 202 may be formed of the same material or be formed from different materials. In one embodiment, at least a portion of the housing 202 may be substantially rigid so as to retain a predetermined shape during transportation, use and/or storage of the drug delivery device 200. In another embodiment, at least a portion of the housing 202 may be elastically deformable so as to change the volume of the drug-retaining region 102 in a manner that facilitates (e.g., induces or aids) transportation drug within the drug-retaining region 102 to

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a location outside the drug delivery device **200**. In another embodiment, at least a portion of the housing **202** may be plastically deformable so as to facilitate transportation drug within the drug-retaining region **102** to a location outside the drug delivery device **200**.

The barrier **204** communicates with the interior of the drug-retaining region **102** and the location outside the drug delivery device **200**. Thus, according to some embodiments, the barrier **204** defines at least a portion of the drug-retaining region **102**, the barrier **204** contacts at least a portion of the drug-retaining region **102**, the barrier **204** is exposed to drug within the drug-retaining region **102**, or a combination thereof. The barrier **204** may be formed from a single, integral structure or may be formed from a plurality of separate structures. The barrier **204** and the housing **202** may be formed from a single, integral structure or may be formed from a plurality of separate structures. The barrier **204** and the housing **202** may be formed of the same material or from different materials. In one embodiment, barrier **204** may comprise a solid, a liquid, a gel, a gas or a combination thereof. As exemplarily shown in FIG. 2, the barrier **204** is coupled to the exterior surface **206** of the housing **202**. In another embodiment, however, the barrier **204** may be embedded within the housing **202**.

In one embodiment, the drug is transported from the drug-retaining region **102** to a location outside the drug delivery device **200** when the barrier **204** is partially or completely removed the barrier **204** from the housing **202**. In such an embodiment, the barrier **204** may, for example, be hingedly coupled to the housing **202**. In another example, the barrier **204** and the housing **202** may include complementary screw-type threads such that the barrier **204** may be screwed to the housing **202**. In yet another example, the barrier **204** and the housing **202** may include structures configured in any known manner suitable to provide selective coupling and decoupling of the barrier **204** and housing **202**.

In another embodiment, the drug is transported from the drug-retaining region **102** to a location outside the drug delivery device **200** when the drug delivery device **200** is accomplished by deforming the barrier **204**. In such an embodiment, the barrier **204** may, for example, be rupturable so as to allow drug within the drug-retaining region **102** to pass therethrough.

In another embodiment, the drug is transported from the drug-retaining region **102** to a location outside the drug delivery device **200** when a pressure within the drug-retaining region **102** is increased. In such an embodiment, the barrier **204** may, for example, be provided as a capillary passage through which drug within the drug-retaining region **102** can be travel when pressure within the drug-retaining region **102** exceeds a threshold amount.

In another embodiment, the drug is transported from the drug-retaining region **102** to a location outside the drug delivery device **200** when drug diffuses through the barrier **204** to, for example, a tissue of the user. As used herein "tissue" refers to any group of cells that performs a biological function (e.g., skin, nails, blood, mucosa, etc.).

As exemplarily illustrated, the user-engageable element **114** is coupled to the housing **202** so as to be directly engageable the user (e.g., exposed at the exterior surface **206** of the housing **202**). In another embodiment, however, the user-engageable element **114** may be disposed within the housing **202** or within the drug-retaining region **102**. In such an embodiment, at least a portion of the housing **202** may be elastically or plastically deformable so that the user may physically engage with the user-engageable element **114** via

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the housing **202**. In many embodiments, the user-engageable element **114** is configured to be intentionally engaged by the user when, for example, the user no longer requires the drug within the drug-retaining region **102**. In one embodiment, however, the user-engageable element **114** is configured to be incidentally engaged when, for example, the drug delivery device is being tampered with (e.g., the housing **202** is being tampered with to remove the drug within the drug-retaining region **102**).

Constructed as exemplarily described above, the drug delivery device **200** may be provided as an inhaler, a syringe, an intravenous bag, an implantable drug delivery system, a transdermal patch, a pill bottle, a liquid medicine bottle an eyedropper, or the like or a combination thereof. Thus, the drug within the drug-retaining region **102** of the drug delivery device **200** may be transportable to the user via inhalation, injection, passive transdermal delivery, active transdermal delivery, oral ingestion, in vivo delivery, topical delivery, or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one sensor arranged operably proximate to the drug-retaining region **102** (e.g., at location I), at least one sensor arranged operably proximate to the user-engageable element **114** (e.g., at location II), at least one sensor arranged so as to be operably proximate to the user when the user is within an operable range of the drug delivery device **200** (e.g., at location III), at least one sensor arranged so as to be operably proximate to an external environment outside the drug delivery device **200** and the user (e.g., at location IV), or a combination thereof. An exemplary discussion of sensors of the sensor unit **104** that may be arranged operably proximate to the aforementioned local environments **108** (i.e., the drug-retaining region **102**, the user-engageable element **114**, the user **110**, and the external environment **112**) is provided in the paragraphs below.

When the sensor unit **104** includes at least one sensor arranged operably proximate to the drug-retaining region **102** (e.g., at location I), the sensor unit **104** may detect a mechanical characteristic, a thermal characteristic, an electrical characteristic, an optical characteristic, a chemical characteristic, or the like or a combination thereof of the drug-retaining region **102** that is dependent on the amount of drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** and generate an output corresponding to a value of the detected characteristic. Thus, the value of the detected characteristic may correspond to the amount of drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102**. Accordingly, the value of the characteristic detected by the sensor unit **104** may be outside a predetermined range when the amount of drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** is below a threshold amount. In addition, the rate at which the value detected by the sensor unit may be outside a predetermined range when the rate at which drug is transported out of the drug-retaining region **102** (i.e., the "drug transport rate") exceeds the drug transport rate when the user is within the operable range of the drug delivery device (i.e., a "normal drug transport rate"). Therefore, the predetermined condition may be satisfied when the amount of drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** is below a threshold amount, when the drug transport rate exceeds a normal drug transport rate, or a combination thereof.

A mechanical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** may, for example, include pressure, mass, or the like or a combination thereof, which changes as the amount of drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** changes. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one sensor such as a pressure sensor, an accelerometer, or the

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like or a combination thereof. In another example, a mechanical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** may include an acoustic wave propagation characteristic within the drug-retaining region **102**. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include an acoustic emitter (e.g., a speaker) and an acoustic detector (e.g., a microphone). The acoustic detector may detect a change in the amount or presence of a drug or drug matrix within the drug-retaining region **102** by monitoring a change in propagation velocity of acoustic waves emitted by the acoustic emitter, a phase change of acoustic waves emitted by the acoustic emitter, the transmitted intensity of acoustic waves emitted by the acoustic emitter, a reflected intensity of acoustic waves emitted by the acoustic emitter, a scattered intensity of acoustic waves emitted by the acoustic emitter, an absorbed intensity of acoustic waves emitted by the acoustic emitter, or the like or a combination thereof.

A thermal characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** may, for example, include temperature, thermal conductivity, thermal resistance, or the like or a combination thereof, which changes as the amount of drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** changes. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one temperature sensor such as a thermometer, a thermistor, a thermocouple, a temperature sensitive resistor, or the like or a combination thereof.

An electrical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** may, for example, include dielectric constant, electrical conductivity, electrical inductance, electrical impedance, electrical resistance, or the like or a combination thereof, which changes as the amount of drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** changes. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one electrical sensor such as an electrical resistance sensor, an electrical current sensor, an electrical voltage sensor, or the like or a combination thereof.

For example, the ionic conductivity of the drug-retaining region **102** may be highly dependent on the amount of drug retained within the drug-retaining region **102**, particularly in the case where the drug has a net non-zero charge. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include two electrodes configured to measure DC impedance therebetween two electrodes can provide characteristic resistances or, inversely, conductivity. Ionic conductivity of the drug-retaining region **102** is directly dependent on the charged drug content. In another example, the sensor unit **104** may include a reference standard electrode to perform impedance spectroscopy, thereby offering the ability to monitor a resonant frequency characteristic of the drug, as well as phase and intensity shifts resulting from changes in the drug concentration or electrode configuration.

An optical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** may, for example, include optical transmittance, index of refraction, optical reflectance, or the like or a combination thereof, which changes as the amount of drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** changes. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one optical sensor such as a photodetector (e.g., sensitive to visible light, infra-red light, ultraviolet light, or the like) configured to detect an optical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102**. In one example, the sensor unit **104** may further include a light-emitting element (e.g., an LED) configured to transmit light (e.g., visible light, infra-red light, ultraviolet light or the like) through the drug-retaining region **102** to the photodetector.

In one embodiment, the optical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** includes the interaction of light with the drug or with a light-conducting medium within

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which the drug is retained. In the case where the drug is an integral part of the light-conducting medium, the drug may have a characteristic absorption band. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include one or more LEDs and/or photodiodes configured to monitor the characteristic absorption band of the drug. The drug may act as a scattering center (immiscible mass or particulate). The rate of drug usage can be tracked by monitoring the reduction in the scattered light signal. In another embodiment, the removal of the drug from the light-conducting medium may produce voids or fluctuations in the index of refraction yielding an increase in the scattered light signal.

In another embodiment, the optical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** includes the potential fluorescence characteristics of the drug. Upon illumination of the appropriate wavelength, the drug may fluoresce. This fluorescence can be monitored for intensity shifts resulting from drug usage. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include one or more LEDs and/or photodiodes configured to cause the drug to fluoresce.

In another embodiment, the optical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** includes a supplemental optical signature corresponding, for example, to the expiration of the drug. In this case, the drug-retaining region **102** may further retain a marker (e.g., a dye) that changes color over time. The color change could result from time lapse, pH change or moisture exposure. Again using a simple broad band light source, a filter and a photodiode, the designed end of use could be digitally detected by the sensor unit **104**.

A chemical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** may, for example, include the chemical composition of a material adjacent to a sensor at a location within/adjacent to the drug-retaining region **102**, or the like, that changes as the amount of drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** changes. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one chemical sensor such as a gas sensor (e.g., sensitive to air, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, oxygen, methane, or the like, or a combination thereof), a liquid sensor (e.g., sensitive to water, drug compositions, or the like, or a combination thereof), or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, a chemical characteristic of the drug-retaining region **102** may include pH. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may be provided as a pH sensor. In one embodiment, pH may increase or decrease upon a decrease in drug concentration. Commercially available Ag/AgCl miniaturized pH electrodes may be used to locally monitor the proton concentration of the drug-retaining region **102**. In another embodiment, the sensor unit **104** may include ion-selective membranes integrated with a pH sensor, thereby providing pathways to measure ions such as potassium, calcium, sodium, etc., which allows for the direct or indirect measurement of the drug concentration. More complex drug delivery systems (e.g., IV delivery devices used within a hospital setting) may use miniaturized field asymmetric waveform ion mobility spectrometry to monitor the head space in the drug-retaining region **102**. The vapors present in the drug-retaining region **102** may be directly correlated to the remaining concentration and the rate of consumption.

When the sensor unit **104** includes at least one sensor arranged operably proximate to the user-engageable element **114** (e.g., at location II), the sensor unit **104** may detect a mechanical characteristic, a thermal characteristic, an electrical characteristic, an optical characteristic, a chemical characteristic, or the like or a combination thereof of the user-engageable element **114** that is present when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114** and generate

an output corresponding to a value of the detected characteristic. Accordingly, the value of the characteristic detected by the sensor unit **104** may be within a predetermined range when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**. Therefore, the predetermined condition may be satisfied when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**.

A mechanical characteristic of the user-engageable element **114** may, for example, include pressure, mass, or the like or a combination thereof, which changes when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one sensor such as a pressure sensor, an accelerometer, or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the user-engageable element **114** may be provided as a mechanical switch. Activation of the switch by the user may generate an electrical signal indicating that a predetermined condition has occurred. The switch may, for example, include a single-use push-to-connect button. When the drug delivery device **200** is provided as a transdermal patch, the user-engageable element **114** may be mechanically activated during the process of removing the patch from the user's skin. Such a user-engageable element **114** may be provided as a switch or a stress/strain gauge.

In another embodiment, the user-engageable element **114** may be provided as a piezoelectric element. The piezoelectric element may be mechanically deformed when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**. Upon being mechanically deformed, an electric current may be generated by the piezoelectric element as the output of the sensor unit **104**. In one embodiment, the piezoelectric element may be directly engageable by the user when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**. In another embodiment, the piezoelectric element may be indirectly engageable by the user. In such an embodiment, the user-engageable element **114** may include an intermediate element that can be actuated by the user when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**. Upon being actuated, the intermediate element contacts the piezoelectric element. Therefore, the piezoelectric element may be indirectly engageable by the user when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**.

A thermal characteristic of the user-engageable element **114** may, for example, include temperature, thermal conductivity, thermal resistance, or the like or a combination thereof, which changes when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one temperature sensor such as a thermometer, a thermocouple, a thermistor, a temperature sensitive resistor, or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the user-engageable element **114** may include an element that is thermally coupled to the sensor unit **104**. The user may engage with the user-engageable element **114** (e.g., by placing a finger onto the user-engageable element **114**) to locally heat the element above a predetermined threshold temperature. The element may also be heated above the threshold temperature using standard household appliances (e.g., hair dryer, microwave oven, or the like).

An electrical characteristic of the user-engageable element **114** may, for example, include dielectric constant, electrical conductivity, electrical inductance, electrical impedance, electrical resistance, or the like or a combination thereof, which changes when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one electrical sensor such as an

electrical resistance sensor, an electrical current sensor, an electrical voltage sensor, or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the user-engageable element **114** may, for example, include a switch. When the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**, the switch may be actuated to close an electric circuit and connect the sensor unit **104** to a power source (not shown) included, for example, as part of the drug delivery device **200**. In one embodiment, the switch may, for example, include a single-use push-to-connect button. When the drug delivery device **200** is provided as a transdermal patch, the switch may be activated during the process of removing the patch from the user's skin. In such an embodiment, the user-engageable element **114** may be provided as a switch or a stress/strain gauge.

In another embodiment, and with reference to FIG. 3, the user-engageable element **114** may, for example, include an electrically conductive material **302** and a dielectric material **304** (e.g., air, a dielectric film, etc.) separating the electrically conductive material **302** from the sensor unit **104**. The electrically conductive material **302** may be coupled to a power source (not shown) included, for example, as part of the drug delivery device **200** and may be considered a drive electrode. The electrode of the sensor unit **104** may be considered a sense electrode. When the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**, the electrically conductive material **302** of the drive electrode and/or the dielectric material **304** may be deformed, thereby changing the capacitance between the electrically conductive material **302** and the dielectric material **304**, which affects a voltage present at the sense electrode (i.e., the sensor unit **104**).

In yet another embodiment, and with reference to FIG. 4, the user-engageable element **114** may, for example, include an electrically conductive material **402** and a dielectric material **404** (e.g., air, a dielectric film, etc.) separating the electrically conductive material **402** from the sensor unit **104**. The electrically conductive material **402** may be coupled to a power source (not shown) included, for example, as part of the drug delivery device **200** and may be considered a drive electrode. The electrode of the sensor unit **104** may be considered a sense electrode. When the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**, a capacitance between the electrically conductive material **402** of the drive electrode and the sense electrode (i.e., the sensor unit **104**) changes, which affects a voltage present at the sense electrode (i.e., the sensor unit **104**).

In yet another embodiment, the user-engageable element **114** may, for example, include two electrodes of a normally open circuit, arranged at the surface of the drug delivery unit. The user may engage with the user-engageable element **114** by placing his or her finger or skin onto the two electrodes. When the user's finger or skin is placed onto the two electrodes, the normally open circuit is closed.

An optical characteristic of the user-engageable element **114** may, for example, include optical transmittance, index of refraction, optical reflectance, or the like or a combination thereof, which changes when the user engages with the user-engageable element **114**. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one optical sensor such as a photodetector (e.g., sensitive to visible light, infra-red radiation, or the like) a light-emitting element (e.g., an LED) configured to illuminate the light photodetector (e.g., with visible light, infra-red radiation, or the like), or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the user-engageable element **114** may, for example, include window through which light may

be transmitted and an opaque layer covering the window, which may be removed by the user when the user engages with the user-engageable element 114. Therefore, the sensor unit 104 may include an optical sensor such as photodetector configured to detect light transmitted through the window.

In another embodiment, the user-engageable element 114 may, for example, include a light-emitting element (e.g., an LED) that may be activated to emit light when the user engages with the user-engageable element 114. Therefore, the sensor unit 104 may include an optical sensor such as photodetector configured to detect light emitted by the light-emitting element. The light-emitting element may, for example, emit visible light, infra-red light, or the like. In one embodiment, the light-emitting element emits a different wavelength of light corresponding to the drug retained within the drug-retaining region 102. In another embodiment, the light-emitting element emits pulses of light at different frequencies corresponding to the drug retained within the drug-retaining region 102.

A chemical characteristic of the user-engageable element 114 may, for example, include the chemical composition of a material adjacent to a sensor at a location within/adjacent to the user-engageable element 114, or the like, that changes when the user engages with the user-engageable element 114. Accordingly, the sensor unit 104 may include at least one chemical sensor such as a gas sensor (e.g., sensitive to air, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, oxygen, methane, or the like, or a combination thereof), a liquid sensor (e.g., sensitive to water, drug compositions, or the like, or a combination thereof), or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the user-engageable element 114 may, for example, include a capsule containing a chemical. When the user engages with the user-engageable element 114, the capsule may be ruptured to release the chemical. Therefore, the sensor unit 104 may include a chemical sensor configured to detect the released chemical. In this embodiment, the chemical characteristic of the user-engageable element 114 may also be considered a mechanical characteristic.

In another embodiment, the user-engageable element 114 may, for example, include cavity adapted to receive a chemical. When the user engages with the user-engageable element 114, the user may provide a chemical (e.g., water, vinegar, or the like) within the cavity. Therefore, the sensor unit 104 may include a chemical sensor configured to detect the chemical provided within the cavity.

In another embodiment, the user-engageable element 114 may, for example, include a sensing interface of the sensor unit 104, wherein the sensor unit 104 is a pH sensor. When the user engages with the user-engageable element 114 (e.g., by placing a finger or skin onto the sensing interface of the sensor unit 104) the pH sensor may detect the user's skin.

In another embodiment, the user-engageable element 114 may include a seal covering the sensor unit 104. When the user engages with the user-engageable element 114 (e.g., by removing/breaking the seal), the sensor unit 104 is exposed to moisture, CO₂, air, etc.

When the sensor unit 104 includes at least one sensor arranged operably proximate to the user when the user is within an operable range of the drug delivery device 200 (e.g., at location III), the sensor unit 104 may detect a mechanical characteristic, a thermal characteristic, an electrical characteristic, an optical characteristic, a chemical characteristic, or the like or a combination thereof of the user that is dependent on the user being within an operable range of the drug delivery device 200 and generate an output corresponding to a value of the detected characteristic.

Accordingly, the value of the characteristic detected by the sensor unit 104 may be outside a predetermined range when the user is outside the operable range of the drug delivery device 200. Therefore, the predetermined condition may be satisfied when the user is outside the operable range of the drug delivery device 200.

A mechanical characteristic of the user 110 may, for example, include the presence of the user's body within the operable range of the drug delivery device 200, the user's blood pressure, the user's heart rate, pore dilation of the user's skin, a force exerted by the user's body against the drug delivery device 200, or the like or a combination thereof, that can be detected when the user is within an operable range of the drug delivery device 200. Accordingly, the sensor unit 104 may include at least one sensor such as a proximity sensor (e.g., a capacitive-type, a magnetic-type, an inductive-type, an optical-type, an acoustic-type, or the like or a combination thereof), a blood pressure sensor, an optical sensor coupled with a light-emitting element, a pressure sensor, or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the sensor unit 104 may be provided as exemplarily described above with respect to FIG. 3. In such an embodiment, one or more of the drive electrode, the dielectric material, and the sense electrode may be deformed by the user's body when the user is within the operable range of the drug delivery device 200. When one or more of the drive electrode, the dielectric material, and the sense electrode is deformed, the capacitance between the drive electrode and the sense electrode is changed, which affects a voltage present at the sense electrode. Implemented as exemplarily described herein, the sensor unit 104 is thus configured to detect a force exerted by the user's body. The voltage present at the sense electrode may constitute the output of the sensor unit 104.

In another embodiment, the sensor unit 104 may be provided as a piezoelectric element. When the user's body within the operable range of the drug delivery device 200, the piezoelectric element may be mechanically deformed. Upon being mechanically deformed, an electric current may be generated by the piezoelectric element as the output of the sensor unit 104. In one embodiment, the piezoelectric element may be mechanically deformed via direct contact with the user's body when the user's body is within the operable range of the drug delivery device 200. In another embodiment, sensor unit 104 may include an intermediate element that can be actuated by the user's body when the user's body is within the operable range of the drug delivery device 200. Upon being actuated, the intermediate element contacts the piezoelectric element.

A thermal characteristic of the user 110 may, for example, include temperature of the user, thermal conductivity of the user's tissue, thermal resistance of the user's tissue, or the like or a combination thereof, that can be detected when the user is within an operable range of the drug delivery device 200. Accordingly, the sensor unit 104 may include at least one temperature sensor such as a thermometer, a thermocouple, a temperature sensitive resistor, or the like or a combination thereof. In one embodiment, the sensor unit 104 may include a localized heater configured to control the temperature of a space adjacent to be within a specified range when the user's body is within the operable range of the drug delivery device 200 (e.g., due to a thermal resistance of the user's body). The thermometer (or thermocouple, or temperature sensitive resistor, etc.) may then sense a temperature decrease of the space when the user's body is outside the operable range of the drug delivery device 200.

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An electrical characteristic of the user **110** may, for example, include a dielectric constant of the user's tissue, an electrical conductivity of the user's tissue, electrical inductance of the user's tissue, electrical impedance of the user's tissue, electrical resistance of the user's tissue, an electrical activity of the user's heart (ECG), or the like or a combination thereof, that can be detected when the user is within an operable range of the drug delivery device **200**. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one electrical sensor such as an electrical resistance sensor, an electrical current sensor, an electrical voltage sensor, or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the sensor unit **104** may be provided as exemplarily described above with respect to FIG. **4**. In such an embodiment, the drive electrode and the sense electrode may be contacted by the user's body when the user is within the operable range of the drug delivery device **200**. When the drive electrode and the sense electrode are contacted by the user's body, the capacitance between the drive electrode and the sense electrode is changed, which affects a voltage present at the sense electrode. Implemented as exemplarily described herein, the sensor unit **104** is thus configured to detect the dielectric constant of the user's tissue. The voltage present at the sense electrode may constitute the output of the sensor unit **104**.

In another embodiment, the sensor unit **104** may include a drive electrode and a sense electrode similar to those described above with respect to FIG. **4**, and may additionally include a seal electrically connecting the drive electrode and the sense electrode. The seal may be configured to be broken or removed from between the drive electrode and the sense electrode simultaneously with the removal of the user's body outside the operable range of the drug delivery device **200** (e.g., during the process of physically removing the drug delivery device **200** from the user's body). When the seal is broken or removed, the voltage present at the sense electrode changes, which constitutes the output of the sensor unit **104**.

In another embodiment, the sensor unit **104** may include a first inductor coupled to the drug delivery device **200** and a second inductor coupled to the user's body. When the user's body is within an operable range of the drug delivery device **200**, the first inductor is configured to be within a predetermined range of the second inductor and a predetermined coupling ratio is obtained between the inductors. However, when the user's body is outside the operable range of the drug delivery device **200**, the first inductor is outside the predetermined range of the second inductor and the predetermined coupling ratio is not obtained. Thus, the output of the first inductor may constitute the output of the sensor unit **104**.

In another embodiment, and with reference to FIG. **5**, the sensor unit **104** may include a driving electrode **502** and a sense electrode **504**. The driving electrode **502** may be coupled to a power source (not shown) included, for example, as part of the drug delivery device **200**. The drive electrode **502** and the sense electrode **504** may be spaced apart from the user's body by a predetermined distance or may contact the user's body when the user is within the operable range of the drug delivery device **200**. When the drive electrode and the sense electrode are spaced apart from the user's body by the predetermined distance, the drive electrode **502** and the sense electrode **504** may be capacitively coupled to each other via an electrically differentiated region **506** (as shown by dashed arrows **510**), which is coupled to the user's tissue **508** (e.g., skin). For purposes of discussion, the electrically differentiated region **506** may be considered as part of the user's tissue **508** in the sense that

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it is coupled thereto. When the drive electrode and the sense electrode contact the user's body, the drive electrode **502** and the sense electrode **504** may be conductively coupled to each other via the electrically differentiated region **506**. Implemented as exemplarily described herein, the sensor unit **104** is thus configured to detect the electrical conductivity of the user's tissue. The voltage present at the sense electrode may constitute the output of the sensor unit **104** and, therefore, corresponds to the electrical conductivity of the user's tissue.

The electrically differentiated region **506** may contain a material having an electrical conductivity that is different from the user's tissue **508**. For example, the electrically differentiated region **506** may contain a material having an electrical conductivity that is greater than that of the user's tissue **508**. In the illustrated embodiment, the electrically differentiated region **506** is disposed within the user's tissue **508** and may be provided as an electrically-conductive ink that is injectable into the user's skin, an electrically-conductive plate inserted into the user's skin, or the like or a combination thereof. The electrically-conductive ink may, for example, include a metal that is biocompatible (i.e., inert within the user's tissue **508**) such as gold, titanium, platinum, palladium, or the like or a combination thereof. In another example, the electrically-conductive ink may include a metal that is not biocompatible (e.g., silver, nickel, tungsten, or the like or a combination thereof) that is coated with a biocompatible material such as silicone, Teflon®, parylene C, or the like or a combination thereof. In another embodiment, the electrically differentiated region **506** is disposed on the user's tissue **508** and may be provided as an electrically-conductive film adhered to the user's tissue **508** (e.g., as a sticker). In the illustrated embodiment, the electrically differentiated region **506** extends contiguously under substantially the entire area of at least one of the driving electrode **502** and the sense electrode **504**.

As described above with respect to FIG. **5**, the driving electrode **502** and may be capacitively coupled to the sense electrode **504** via the electrically differentiated region **506** when the user is within the operable range of the drug delivery device **200**. Thus, the value of the signal output by the sensor unit **104** corresponds to the size of the overlapping area between the driving electrode **502** and the electrically differentiated region **506** in addition to the size of the overlapping area between the sense electrode **504** and the electrically differentiated region **506**. In one embodiment, the value of the voltage obtained at the sense electrode **504** is within a predetermined range when the drug delivery device **200** is arranged such that the drive electrode **502** and/or the sense electrode **504** overlaps the electrically differentiated region **506**, or such that the drive electrode **502** and/or the sense electrode **504** overlap a sufficient area of the electrically differentiated region **506**. Accordingly, the value of the voltage obtained at the sense electrode **504** is outside a predetermined range when the drug delivery device **200** is arranged such that the drive electrode **502** and/or the sense electrode **504** does not overlap the electrically differentiated region **506**, or such that the drive electrode **502** and/or the sense electrode **504** do not overlap a sufficient area of the electrically differentiated region **506**. Therefore, when the value of the voltage obtained at the sense electrode **504** is outside a predetermined range, the user is considered to be outside the operable range of the drug delivery device **200**.

As exemplarily illustrated in FIG. **5**, the electrically differentiated region **506** is provided under substantially the

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entire area of at least one of the driving electrode **502** and the sense electrode **504**. According to another embodiment, and with reference to FIG. **6**, the aforementioned electrically differentiated region **506** may be replaced with an electrically differentiated region **602**, provided in substantially the same manner as the electrically differentiated region **506**, extending contiguously under the driving electrode **502** and the sense electrode **504**; but extending under only a portion of the entire area of the driving electrode **502**, under only a portion of the entire area of the sense electrode **504**, or a combination thereof. What constitutes a “sufficient area” of overlap between the drive electrode **502** and/or the sense electrode **504** with the electrically differentiated region **602** may be determined by a third party (e.g., a physician prescribing the drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102**, a pharmacist providing the drug delivery device **200**, or the like). In this manner, only the intended user of the drug contained within drug-retaining region **102** will be capable obtaining the drug through proper use of the drug delivery device **200**.

According to another embodiment, and with reference to FIG. **7**, the aforementioned sense electrode **504** may be replaced with an array **702** of a plurality of sense electrodes **704** having different areas, which are electrically connected to each other. At least one of the plurality of sense electrodes **704** may overlap the electrically differentiated region **602** and at least one of the plurality of sense electrodes **704** may not overlap the electrically differentiated region **602**. Although not illustrated, the aforementioned driving electrode **502** may additionally, or alternatively, be replaced with an array of a plurality of driving electrodes having different areas, which are electrically connected to each other such that at least one of the plurality of driving electrodes overlaps the electrically differentiated region **602** and at least one of the plurality of driving electrodes does not overlap the electrically differentiated region **602**.

In one embodiment, the value of the collective voltage obtained at the plurality of sense electrodes **704** is within a predetermined range when the drug delivery device **200** is arranged such that predetermined ones of the plurality of sense electrodes **704** within the array of sense electrodes **702** overlap the electrically differentiated region **602**, or such that predetermined ones of the plurality of sense electrodes **704** within the array of sense electrodes **702** overlap a sufficient area of the electrically differentiated region **602**. Accordingly, the value of the collective voltage obtained at the plurality of sense electrodes **704** is outside a predetermined range when the drug delivery device **200** is arranged such that predetermined ones of the plurality of sense electrodes **704** within the array of sense electrodes **702** do not overlap the electrically differentiated region **602**, or such that predetermined ones of the plurality of sense electrodes **704** within the array of sense electrodes **702** do not overlap a sufficient area of the electrically differentiated region **602**.

Similar to the embodiment discussed above with respect to FIG. **6**, what constitutes a “sufficient area” of overlap between the plurality of sense electrodes **704** within the array of sense electrodes **702** with the electrically differentiated region **602** may be determined by a third party (e.g., a physician prescribing the drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102**, a pharmacist providing the drug delivery device **200**, or the like). In this manner, only the intended user of the drug contained within drug-retaining region **102** will be capable obtaining the drug through proper use of the drug delivery device **200**. In another embodiment, the predetermined ones of the plurality of sense electrodes **704** within the array of sense electrodes **702** may be identified by

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a third party such as the manufacturer of the drug delivery device **200**, the physician prescribing the drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102**, the pharmacist providing the drug delivery device **200**, or the like. In this manner, only the intended user of the drug contained within drug-retaining region **102** will be capable obtaining the drug through proper use of the drug delivery device **200**.

As exemplarily described above, the sensor unit **104** may be configured to detect the electrical conductivity of the user’s tissue (i.e., the electrically differentiated region **506**). In other embodiments, however, the sensor unit **104** may be configured to detect a magnetic characteristic or a dielectric constant of the user’s tissue.

For example, the electrically differentiated region **506** may be replaced with a magnetically differentiated region containing a material having a detectable magnetic property (e.g., a ferromagnetic material such as iron oxide, cobalt, magnesium oxide, or the like or a combination thereof). A current flow can be induced within the magnetically differentiated region when the user’s body is removed to be outside the operable range of the drug delivery device **200**.

In another example, the electrically differentiated region **506** may be replaced with a dielectrically differentiated region containing a material (e.g., silicon oxide, silicon oxynitride, or the like or a combination thereof) having a relatively large dielectric constant compared to that of the user’s tissue.

An optical characteristic of the user **110** may, for example, include optical transmittance of the user’s tissue, index of refraction of the user’s tissue, optical reflectance of the user’s tissue, spectral emission of the user’s tissue, or the like or a combination thereof that can be detected when the user is within an operable range of the drug delivery device **200**. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one optical sensor such as a photodetector (e.g., sensitive to visible light, infra-red radiation, or the like) a light-emitting element (e.g., an LED) configured to illuminate the light photodetector (e.g., with visible light, infra-red radiation, or the like), or the like or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one optical sensor such as a photodetector (e.g., sensitive to visible light, infra-red light, ultraviolet light, or the like) and a seal configured to optically shield the at least one photodetector. The seal may be configured to be broken or removed from the at least one photodetector simultaneously with the removal of the user’s body outside the operable range of the drug delivery device **200** (e.g., during the process of physically removing the drug delivery device **200** from the user’s body). When the seal is broken or removed, the photodetector detects the increased intensity of light, which constitutes the output of the sensor unit **104**.

In another embodiment, the sensor unit **104** may be provided in a similar manner as discussed above with respect to FIGS. **5-7**, but the driving electrode **502** may be replaced by one or more light-emitting elements, the sense electrode **504** (or **704**) may be replaced by one or more photodetectors, and the electrically differentiated region **506** (or **602**) may be replaced by an optically differentiated region coupled to the user’s tissue **508**.

In one embodiment, the optically differentiated region may contain a material having an optical characteristic that is different from an optical characteristic of the user’s tissue **508**. For example, the material may absorb, transmit, refract light emitted by the one or more light-emitting elements differently from the user’s tissue **508**. In one embodiment,

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the material of the optically differentiated region may fluoresce in the presence of light emitted by the one or more light-emitting elements.

In one embodiment, the optically differentiated region may be disposed within the user's tissue **508** and may be provided as an ink that is injectable into the user's skin, a plate inserted into the user's skin, or the like or a combination thereof. In another embodiment, the optically differentiated region is disposed on the user's tissue **508** and may be provided as a film adhered to the user's tissue **508** (e.g., as a sticker).

In one embodiment, the optically differentiated region may be provided as one or more light-emitting element disposed on the user's tissue **508** (e.g., by the use of an adhesive, a strap formed around a part of the user's body, etc.). In such an embodiment, the sensor unit **104** includes one or more photodetectors configured to receive light emitted by the one or more light-emitting elements when the user is within an operable range of the drug delivery device **200**.

A chemical characteristic of the user **110** may, for example, include the presence of the user's perspiration, ion concentration in the user's perspiration, pH of the user's perspiration, chemical composition of the user's tissue, or the like or a combination thereof that can be detected when the user is within an operable range of the drug delivery device **200**. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one chemical sensor such as a moisture sensor, a pH sensor, or the like, or a combination thereof) or the like or a combination thereof.

When the sensor unit **104** includes at least one sensor arranged operably proximate to the external environment **112** (e.g., at location IV), the sensor unit **104** may detect a mechanical characteristic, a thermal characteristic, an electrical characteristic, an optical characteristic, a chemical characteristic, or the like or a combination thereof of the external environment **112** and generate an output corresponding to a value of the detected characteristic. Accordingly, the value of the characteristic detected by the sensor unit **104** may be outside a predetermined range when the external environment **112** is not the predetermined environment of the drug delivery device **200**. Therefore, the predetermined condition may be satisfied when the external environment **112** is not the predetermined environment of the drug delivery device **200**.

A mechanical characteristic of the external environment **112** may, for example, include pressure, or the like. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one sensor such as a pressure sensor or the like or a combination thereof. In another example, a mechanical characteristic of the external environment **112** may include acoustic wave propagation of the external environment **112**. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include an acoustic emitter (e.g., a speaker) and an acoustic detector (e.g., a microphone), wherein the acoustic detector may monitor a change in propagation velocity of acoustic waves emitted by the acoustic emitter, phase change, the transmitted intensity, reflected intensity, scattered intensity, absorbed intensity, or the like or a combination thereof.

A thermal characteristic of the external environment **112** may, for example, include temperature, or the like. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one temperature sensor such as a thermometer, a thermocouple, a temperature sensitive resistor, or the like or a combination thereof.

An electrical characteristic of the external environment **112** may, for example, include dielectric constant, electrical

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conductivity, electrical inductance, electrical impedance, electrical resistance, or the like or a combination thereof. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one electrical sensor such as an electrical resistance sensor, an electrical current sensor, an electrical voltage sensor, or the like or a combination thereof.

An optical characteristic of the external environment **112** may, for example, include brightness. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one optical sensor such as a photodetector (e.g., sensitive to visible light, infra-red light, ultraviolet light, or the like). Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one optical sensor such as a photodetector (e.g., sensitive to visible light, infra-red light, ultraviolet light, or the like) configured to detect an optical characteristic of the external environment **112**. In one example, the sensor unit **104** may further include a light-emitting element (e.g., an LED) configured to transmit light (e.g., visible light, infra-red light, ultraviolet light or the like) through the external environment **112**.

A chemical characteristic of the external environment **112** may, for example, include the presence of a chemical such as water (e.g., present in liquid or vapor form), or the like. Accordingly, the sensor unit **104** may include at least one chemical sensor such as a gas sensor (e.g., sensitive to air, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, oxygen, methane, or the like, or a combination thereof), a liquid sensor (e.g., sensitive to water, drug compositions, or the like, or a combination thereof), a pH sensor, or the like or a combination thereof.

FIG. **8** schematically illustrates elements of the deactivation unit shown in FIG. **1**, according to some embodiments.

As mentioned above, a drug may be rendered "ineffective" when the drug cannot be transported from the drug-retaining region **102** to a location outside the drug delivery device.

Accordingly, in one embodiment, the drug cannot be removed from the drug-retaining region **102** when the drug is prevented from being diffused through the barrier **204** of the drug delivery device **200**. Accordingly, and with reference to FIG. **8**, the drug delivery device **200** may include an energy source **802** configured to supply energy to the drug-retaining region **102**, the barrier **204** or a combination thereof. Energy supplied by the energy source **802** may be used to facilitate transport of the drug from the drug-retaining region **102** to a location outside the drug delivery device **200** (e.g., to the user's tissue). Energy supplied by the energy source **802** may be ultrasonic vibrations, an electrical field, or the like or a combination thereof. As also shown in FIG. **8**, the deactivation unit **106** may, for example, include control circuitry **804** configured to prevent the energy from being supplied from the energy source **802**. As used herein, the term "circuitry" refers to any type of executable instructions that can be implemented as, for example, hardware, firmware, and/or software. Thus, the control circuitry **804** may be provided as a dedicated fixed-purpose circuit and/or one or more partially or wholly programmable circuits.

In one embodiment, the drug may be rendered "ineffective" by preventing the drug from being transported from the drug-retaining region **102** to a location outside the drug delivery device, in the manner exemplarily described above, when an output of the sensor unit **104** having at least one sensor at one or more of locations I-IV described above with respect to FIG. **2** satisfies a predetermined condition.

As mentioned above, a drug may be rendered "ineffective" when the drug is neutralized within the drug-retaining region **102**.

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Accordingly, in one embodiment, the deactivation unit **106** may include a neutralizing unit **806** coupled to the control circuitry **804**. The neutralizing unit **806** may be configured to neutralize the drug within the drug-retaining region **102**. The neutralizing unit **806** may be disposed outside the drug-retaining region **102**, within the drug-retaining region **102**, or a combination thereof.

In one embodiment, the neutralizing unit **806** is configured to neutralize the drug within the drug-retaining region **102** by supplying energy (e.g., electricity, light, heat, or the like) to the drug within the drug-retaining region **102**. In another embodiment, the neutralizing unit **806** may include capsules exposed to the drug-retaining region **102**. The capsules may contain a material and be degradable by any suitable means to release the material within the drug-retaining region **102**. When the material is released within the drug-retaining region **102**, the drug is rendered ineffective. Examples of the neutralizing unit **806** can be found in co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/357,108 now U.S. Pat. No. 7,838,715 issued on Nov. 23, 2010, entitled "DRUG DEACTIVATION SYSTEM AND METHOD OF DEACTIVATING A DRUG USING THE SAME," the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

In one embodiment, the drug may be rendered "ineffective" by neutralizing the drug within the drug-retaining region **102**, in the manner exemplarily described above, when an output of the sensor unit **104** having at least one sensor at one or more of locations I-IV described above with respect to FIG. 2 satisfies a predetermined condition.

As mentioned above, a drug may be rendered "ineffective" when the bio-activity of the drug is blocked within the user.

Accordingly, in one embodiment, the deactivation unit **106** may, for example, include a deactivation reservoir **808** coupled to the control circuitry **804**. The deactivation reservoir **808** may contain a substance configured to render the drug ineffective within the user. In one embodiment, the substance may be transported from the deactivation reservoir **808** to the user in the same manner or in a different manner as the drug is transported from the drug-retaining region **102** to the user. In one embodiment, the substance contained within the deactivation reservoir **808** may include an antagonist to the drug within the drug-retaining region **102**. Nevertheless, it will be appreciated that the substance contained within the deactivation reservoir **808** may include any suitable substance based on the drug retained within the drug-retaining region **102**. Table 1 identifies some examples of substances that may be contained within the deactivation reservoir **808**, depending on some exemplary drugs that may be retained within the drug-retaining region **102**.

TABLE 1

Medical Application	Drug retained within drug-retaining region 102	Substance contained within deactivation reservoir 808
Pain management	morphine, codeine, hydromorphone, hydrocodone, oxycodone, oxymorphone, desomorphine, diacetylmorphine, nicomorphine, dipropanoylmorphine, benzylmorphine, pethidine, methadone, tramadol, propoxyphene, endorphins,	Cyprodime, Naltrindole, Norbinaltorphimine, Hydrogen peroxide, metabolizing enzymes such as NADH and NADPH, caustic reactants, such as NaOH, KOH, trimethylamine

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TABLE 1-continued

Medical Application	Drug retained within drug-retaining region 102	Substance contained within deactivation reservoir 808
Antibiotics	enkephalins, dynorphins, endomorphins, Penicillin, cephalosporins, other β -lactam antibiotics, Aminoglycosidic antibiotics, fluoroquinolones, nitrofurans, vancomycin, monobactams, co-trimoxazole, metronidazole	β lactamase enzyme, strong acids, strong bases
anti-convulsants	Aldehydes, Aromatic allylic alcohols, Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, Bromides, Carbamates, Carboxamides, Fatty acids, Fructose derivatives, Gaba analogs, Hydantoins, Oxazolidinediones, Propionates, Pyrimidinediones, Pyrrolidines, Succinimides, Sulfonamides, Triazines, Ureas, Valproylamides	Strong acids, strong bases
Reproductive Hormones	Amine-derived hormones: catecholamines, thyroxine; Peptide hormones: TRH, vasopressin; Protein hormones: insulin, growth hormone, luteinizing hormone, follicle-stimulating hormone, thyroid-stimulating hormone; testosterone, cortisol, calcitriol	Strong acids, strong bases, hydrolytic enzymes

In one embodiment, the bio-activity of the drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** may be blocked within the user, in the manner exemplarily described above, when an output of the sensor unit **104** having at least one sensor at one or more of locations I-IV described above with respect to FIG. 2 satisfies a predetermined condition.

In another embodiment, the sensor unit **104** is configured to detect a physiological characteristic of the user and the predetermined condition is satisfied when the physiological characteristic detected by the sensor unit **104** indicates that the user has overdosed on the drug within the drug-retaining region **102**.

For example, when the sensor unit **104** is operatively coupled to the user's tissue in the manner as described with respect to FIG. 2, and the user is not overdosing on the drug within the drug-retaining region **102**, a detected physiological characteristic of the user is within a representative range. However, when the user is overdosing on the drug within the drug-retaining region **102**, the detected physiological characteristic of the user is outside the representative range. When the detected physiological characteristic of the user is outside the representative range, a characteristic of the signal output by the sensor unit **104** indicates that the user is overdosing. Accordingly, the output signal of the sensor unit **104** indicates that the predetermined condition is satisfied. Upon receipt of the output signal of the sensor unit **104**, the deactivation unit **106** is actuated to render the drug contained within the drug-retaining region **102** ineffective.

It will be appreciated that several of the above-disclosed and other features and functions, or alternatives thereof, may be desirably combined into many other different systems or applications. It will also be appreciated that various pres-

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ently unforeseen or unanticipated alternatives, modifications, variations, or improvements therein may be subsequently made by those skilled in the art which are also intended to be encompassed by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for use with a drug delivery device, the system comprising:

a sensor unit; and

a deactivation unit operatively coupled to an output of the sensor unit and to a drug-retaining region of the drug delivery device, the drug-retaining region containing a drug, the deactivation unit having control circuitry and one of either an energy source or capsules, the deactivation unit to apply the energy or the capsules to the drug-retaining region,

wherein the sensor unit is configured to detect a characteristic of a local environment to determine if the device is connected to a user and generate an output corresponding to a value of the detected characteristic, and

wherein the deactivation unit is configured to render the drug ineffective by neutralizing the drug in the drug-retaining region when the output of the sensor unit satisfies a predetermined condition indicating that the device is not connected to the user.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the local environment comprises the user.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the local environment comprises a user-engageable element coupled to the drug delivery device.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the characteristic of the local environment comprises at least one selected from the group consisting of a mechanical characteristic, a thermal characteristic, an electrical characteristic, an optical characteristic and a chemical characteristic.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the predetermined condition is satisfied when the value of the detected characteristic of the local environment is outside a predetermined range.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the predetermined condition is satisfied when the value of the detected characteristic of the local environment is within a predetermined range.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the predetermined condition is satisfied when a rate at which the value of the detected characteristic of the local environment changes is outside a predetermined range.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the predetermined condition is satisfied when the user engages with a user-engageable element coupled to the drug delivery device.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the drug is transportable to the user from the drug-retaining region when the user is within an operable range of the drug delivery device and

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wherein the predetermined condition is satisfied when the user is outside the operable range of the drug delivery device.

10. A drug delivery device, comprising:

a drug-retaining region containing a drug;

a sensor unit, wherein the sensor unit is configured to detect a characteristic of a local environment to determine if the device is connected to a user and generate an output corresponding to a value of the detected characteristic; and

a deactivation unit operatively coupled to the drug-retaining region and to an output of the sensor unit, the deactivation unit configured to render the drug ineffective by neutralizing the drug in the drug-retaining region when the output of the sensor unit satisfies a predetermined condition indicating that the device is not connected to the user, the deactivation unit having control circuitry and one of either an energy source or capsules, the deactivation unit to apply the energy or the capsules to the drug-retaining region.

11. The drug delivery device of claim 10, wherein the drug delivery device includes at least one selected from the group consisting of an inhaler, a syringe, an intravenous bag, an implanted drug delivery system, a transdermal patch, a pill bottle, a liquid medicine bottle and an eyedropper.

12. The drug delivery device of claim 10, further comprising a housing, wherein the drug-retaining region is located within the housing, and wherein the sensor unit comprises at least one sensor coupled to the housing.

13. The drug delivery device of claim 12, wherein the deactivation unit comprises a neutralizing unit operatively coupled to the drug-retaining region, wherein the neutralizing unit is configured to neutralize the drug when the predetermined condition is satisfied.

14. The drug delivery device of claim 10, further comprising a user-engageable element, wherein a characteristic of the user-engageable element is detectable by the sensor unit when the user engages with the user-engageable element.

15. The drug delivery device of claim 10, further comprising:

when the deactivation unit comprises the energy source, "an energy source operatively coupled to the drug-retaining region,"

"wherein" the drug is transportable from the drug-retaining region to the user upon application of energy from the energy source to the drug-retaining region, and

wherein the deactivation unit "is operatively couple to the energy source and" is further configured to discontinue the application of energy from the energy source to the drug-retaining region when the output of the sensor unit satisfies the predetermined condition.

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